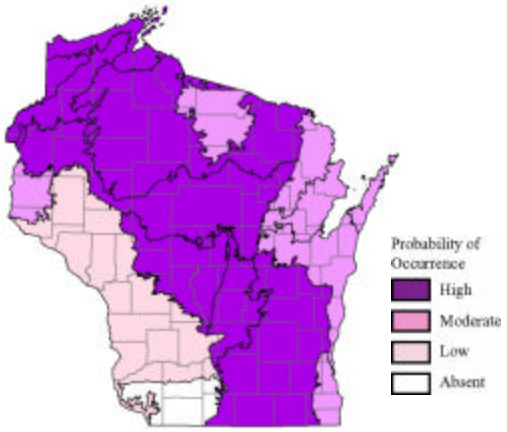
American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

Species Assessment Scores*

State rarity:	3
State threats:	3
State population trend:	5
Global abundance:	3
Global distribution:	2
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	4
Mean Risk Score:	3.3
Area of importance:	5

* Please see the Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries (Section 3.1.1) for definitions of criteria and scores.



Ecological Landscape Associations
Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

Landscape -community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Sand Hills	Emergent marsh
Central Sand Plains	Northern sedge meadow
Central Sand Plains	Open bog
North Central Forest	Emergent marsh
North Central Forest	Northern sedge meadow
North Central Forest	Open bog
Northwest Lowlands	Northern sedge meadow
Northwest Lowlands	Open bog
Northwest Sands	Emergent marsh
Northwest Sands	Northern sedge meadow
Northwest Sands	Open bog
Southeast Glacial Plains	Emergent marsh
Superior Coastal Plain	Emergent marsh
Superior Coastal Plain	Open bog

Threats and Issues

- American Bitterns are declining more quickly from southern Wisconsin for reasons that are not currently fully understood.
- American Bitterns prefer large wetlands and wetlands that have adjacent upland grass cover.
- Loss of wetlands through filling, dredging, altering water levels, etc. is a threat.
- Overgrazing or managing grasslands with mowing can prevent American Bittern nesting.
- It is not known how or if invasive species impact American Bitterns.
- Siltation, eutrophication, and chemical toxins (e.g., pesticides) in wetlands are all threats, particularly in agricultural areas.
- American Bitterns do best within wetland complexes rather than isolated wetlands.

Priority Conservation Actions

- Continue and strengthen wetland protection laws and provide adequate funding for wetland restoration work through the North American Wetland Conservation Act, Wetland Reserve Program, etc. to help protect and restore American Bittern habitat.
- Preserve wetland habitats, particularly large (greater than 10 ha), shallow wetlands with dense growth of robust emergent aquatics.
- Research and develop methods for more effective monitoring of American Bitterns and other secretive marshbirds.
- Evaluate wetland restorations to determine their effectiveness in conserving American Bittern and other non-game species.
- Research the effects of invasive exotic wetland plants on habitat quality.